

Bristol, June 16th 1847 Wednesday

My dear Mrs. May.

The Steamship that left England on the 4th of this month would not have gone without a letter from me to you, had I not depended upon Miss Carpenter's writing to you: she however, was unable to execute her intention.

My last letter to you, acknowledged your yours of May 1st & the packet of books arriving by the same ship, that brought your letter, was written from Boston super Maine on the 10th of May, & I felt some misgiving as to its being in time for the mail then about to depart.

My chief object in desiring you should hear from us a few weeks ago was, that you might be correctly informed of the U.S. agitation which we are endeavoring to excite among the Unitarians. By agitation I mean compelling a little attention to the Slavery question.

I sent you however an Agitation, (I sent one to Dr. Parkman & Dr. Conant) of the 24th May, containing a good report of what took place at the anniversary of the B. & F. U. Socy held this year at Waltham in London.

Trusting believing that the "Am. U. Socy" had sent the "invitation" to our Socy. I went to London purposely, (for otherwise I should not have gone this year) to bring forward the fact of the slaveholding V. President, & as a reason for sending some specific Resolution on the point (I had prepared one) with the such answers as might be sent to the Correspondent who forwarded the invitation. I meant to have availed myself of this opportunity of showing the precise position in which we stood in reference to the Slavery question.

But just before the meeting commenced, I was told that the "invitation" was neither from a Society, nor to our Society, & that of course the Slavery question could not be introduced in reference to it. The propriety of this I saw, & at once gave up all intention & expectation of saying & doing what I went to London to say & do.

When arrangements after the business had begun, & arrangements were being made for proposing & seconding Resolutions, (which cannot be done till the Meeting assembles, as it is never known who will attend from a distance), I was asked to propose that the Report that was to be read, should be "received & adopted," - a formal matter merely, to which I readily consented. The Report was

length, & I did not pay much attention to it knowing I should read it when printed, when my daughter drew my notice to some remarks Mr. Tazant was reading in the American invitation from certain Unitarian Ministers. I was taken by surprise at any introduction of this knotty subject, and what I said, when I rose to propose the adoption of the Report, you will see in the Progress.

I give this detail, as you might wonder, as others have, why I consented to propose the reception of a Report a part of which I did not approve of. I voted however among the minority for the expurgation of that part of which I did not cordially concur.

The Progress gives only a faint idea of the real anxieties (a stronger term I might use) of the discussion. In nothing else, hardly, was done. Finding it impossible in the visible and inpatient state of the meeting to say any thing that would have a patient hearing, & so produce any conviction upon the minds of the uninformed or the prejudiced, I felt it to be my wisest course, (though a very difficult & self-denying one at the moment) to keep out of the skinning battle that I had set up, & to reserve myself for some occasion when I should be heard, or need.

I doubt not that you will be pleased with what took place, & that it will do good to your cause by its effect on the Unitarian Ministers of America: but how far it will directly advance the cause among us I cannot say. Much prejudice I am sure was excited by the unexpected, & as it appeared to many, improper introduction of the subject. Still, I think good will in the end be done, and if some have been rendered more hostile than before to the Abolitionists, the minds of others may have been opened, & excited to inquiry.

One object was accomplished. A Resolution of acknowledgment of the invitation, & of great satisfaction at its reception, was to have been proposed: but it was not brought forward. I watched the proceedings to the close to introduce my addition if such a step would have been warranted. So up to this time, this friendly invitation has received no sort of recognition - not even what common civility & courtesy demanded.

and the reason cannot be doubted; — it is the evil influence of your Slavery.
And yet, many of our friends cry out, what is American Slavery to us! ^{there}
have we right to interfere with the Institutions of the U. States?

What I immediately decided upon was, to write a letter to Mr. Foyant
& insert it in the Register, giving the stating the points on which I
know most ignorance prevails. This post will bring you I hope the
letter. Mr. Foyant has written to me very friendly about it, &
means to answer it. (We do not get angry with, & abuse one another
whenever we differ in opinion.) I have advised him to confine
himself to the question as regards the "B. F. U. Affair" and not to enter upon
the general merits, for I am sure he will commit himself if he do.
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I have been since in correspondence with Mr. Ashworth. (Ed. South)
who was at the Wexley Meeting. He thinks there was a good amount of A. S.
feeling there, but that from want of organization it had was not developed.

I am thinking of printing my letter, as a little tract for circulation.
Your letter of May 29 & 31 by the Brittain in that sealed in the
post, arrived yesterday, & I forwarded the inclosures for Mr.
Armstrong & Miss Carpenter. D. Devey's resignation is curiously

turned. So little am I afraid of any controversy with Mr. Foyant, that
I sent him your letter rec^d yesterday, to help him with any errors of any kind
as that he can find there. I hardly understand what your "Agency"
office means? ^{only} One copy of the Liberator comes to me, & 1 to Mr.

Lampson as I requested. Why does Mr. Garrison make me (in the letter
~~referred~~ ^{wrote} to him, & which he printed in the interesting Lib: of May 14th)
address him as "my dear Brother" (instead of Mr) Garrison? It has

been much amusement to friends here. Thank you for your
account of the Unitⁿ - Assocn. Meeting.

Mr. H. Clapp has heard of Mr. Chapman's having spoken of him in very
gentle terms in a letter to Miss Browne of Bridgewater, & as he had made a
favorable impression there, he is very indignant, & has written a long letter
culpating himself, & condemning your society, to Mr. Russell (a friend
of W. Water. — I had some difficulty in preventing Mr. Armstrong at
the Wexley Meeting, from quoting your authority in his statement
that D. Parkman was pro-slavery. It was loudly called for by Mr.
Mudge & Mr. Thompson — an Anglo-American, who said, not one of

of the misdeeds ^{was} otherwise than "but ends of Slavery, ^{they were only called}
"pro-slavery" because they would not acced in the "intendant & fanatical
proceeding of the Abolitionists to.

I have read "The Church as it is." This indeed an "astounding" expose
I am now reading "The Slave Power." Understanding that you take the
Inquirer, I will ^{send to P. Douglass} ~~also send~~ the copy I intended for you.
With kind remembrance from my dear sister, I am very dear
Yours sincerely
J. B. Collier

1847
P.M. Aug. 16
of preceding.
H. Clapp, Jr.
abusing the
Boston Abolitionists
to R. L. Conquest
H. C.

EXISTOR
1847
1847

June 1846

Rev. S. May

Samuel May Esq
Boston
And Sister

MS. B. 1. 6 v. 2. p. 50

MS. B. 1. 6 v. 2. p. 50